DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 255 538 TM 850 048

TITLE Report of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools in Maryland. An Adaptation of the 16th Annual Gallup Poll.
INSTITUTION Maryland State Dept. of Education, Baltimore.
PUB DATE 1 Oct 84
NOTE 26p.; Poll proposed by Maryland Schools: People on the Grow, the Communication Project of the Maryland State Department of Education. The survey sample was designed by Survey Sampling, Inc., of Westport, Connecticut.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Measures; Discipline; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Extracurricular Activities; Job Performance; Minimum Competency Testing; *Public Opinion; *Public Schools; School Community Relationship; *School Effectiveness; School Personnel; State Surveys; Teacher Salaries
IDENTIFIERS *Gallup Poll; *Maryland; Telephone Surveys

ABSTRACT

This report presents results of the first Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools in Maryland. Based upon the 16th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward Public Schools, this statewide poll provides: (1) benchmark data on the attitudes toward public education of Maryland communities; (2) a vehicle for obtaining regular updates of the data; and (3) valid data to assist Maryland educators in correlating state, local, and national data. Data will be used to train educators in recognizing problems and maintaining communication networks with their publics. Poll results are presented for the nation, Maryland, parental status, sex, race, age groups, and educational levels. Results are organized in three parts: (1) overall ratings of public schools nationally, and of Maryland public schools, teachers, principals and administrators, school boards, and parents; and attitudes toward school tax increases; (2) general education issues such as goals of education, importance of extracurricular activities, attitudes toward a national graduation test, and schoolwork requirements; and (3) current issues such as major problems confronting the public schools, discipline, state teachers examinations, teachers salaries, and attitudes toward increasing the salaries of math and science teachers. The report is based on a random sample of 2,080 replies, drawn from 8,752 completed telephone interviews, in proportion to the number of households in each of Maryland's 24 school districts. (BS)

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Not for Publication
Information Release Date
On or After October 15, 1984

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC'S ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MARYLAND

MSDE
Working Paper
For Discussion Only

An Adaptation of the 16th Annual Gallup Poll

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Maryland State Department of Education
October 1, 1984

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INTRODUCTION

The first Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools in Maryland is based upon the 16th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Public Schools. The fact that the national poll could be adapted and administered in a state is a testimonial to the cooperation of the Gallup Organization and Phi Delta Kappa, national organizations whose leadership to America's educational communities and whose unselfish sharing of technique and content were the catalysts for this project. Thus, Maryland became the first full state to present her own Gallup Poll.

Also, appreciation is expressed to Dr. L. John Martin, University of Maryland, for his interpretation and his report on the statewide data.

MARYLAND SCHOOLS: PEOPLE ON THE GROW, the Communication Project of the Maryland State Department of Education proposed the statewide poll to the 24 superintendents of schools in Maryland to:

1. Provide benchmark data on attitudes of Maryland's communities toward public education.

2. Provide a vehicle for obtaining regular updates of these data.

3. Provide valid data for Maryland educators which will assist them in correlating State and local data with national data.

These benchmark data will be used by the Project Staff for training educators to recognize problems and attitudes identified by their publics and to establish and maintain appropriate networks between educational organizations and their publics.

This State Report is based upon the successful administration of Polls in all of Maryland's 24 school systems.

The report includes the following:

INTRODUCTION
PART I - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
PART II - OVERALL RATINGS
PART III - GENERAL EDUCATION ISSUES
PART IV - CURRENT ISSUES
PART V - DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROCEDURES

PART I - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

When Marylanders are asked to grade their public schools, they give them above-average grades. (Nearly 43 percent of the Maryland sample would give their schools straight A's or B's.)

When asked if they would be willing to pay more taxes if the local public schools said they needed more money, Marylanders say "yes"—almost two to one. Non-whites and people with college education, especially indicate a willingness to pay more taxes if it would be needed for education. In fact, willingness to raise taxes for this purpose increases with the respondents level of education.

More than half of the Marylanders polled believe teachers' salaries are too low. The Maryland public is evenly divided on the idea of paying teachers in shortage fields, such as mathematics and science, a higher wage than that paid to other teachers.

Marylanders rate the nation's public schools, those outside their immediate communities, as only average. Also, the higher a respondent's education, the lower that person rates the nation's schools.

When asked to rate school personnel and parents, Maryland citizens give their teachers the highest grades, followed by those for principals and administrators, and then those for members of school boards. (The grades awarded by the public to principals and administrators appear to get lower with the educational level of the respondent and higher with his or her age.) The Maryland public gives the lowest grades to parents of students in the local public schools for the way they are "bringing up" their children.

Among the various respondent sub-groups in the survey, parents of nonpublic school children were the lowest in their rating of public school teachers. The nonpublic parents also were less friendly toward members of school boards. The school board members should find more friends among women and non-whites than among men and whites.

Marylanders--like the rest of the nation--agree that teaching children to speak and write correctly is probably the most important function of the schools. Marylanders, however, differ dramatically from the rest of the nation in their choice of the second most important goal of education. Maryland respondents place as second in importance "encouraging the desire to continue learning throughout one's life." Americans as a whole relegate this to 12th place.

Equally significant is the fact that sports ranks at the bottom of the Maryland and national agendas as a goal of education. Nor do Marylanders rank very high the school's goals for developing "an appreciation for and participation in the arts, music, literature, theatre, etc." or for developing "an understanding of democracy and to promote participation in

the political process." However, close to nine in ten Marylanders rate extracurricular activities as at least fairly important. This is a higher rating by respondents in Maryland than in the nation as a whole.

Three-fourths of the people in Maryland want their teachers tested by a state board examination before they are permitted to teach. An even larger proportion--nine in ten--wants students to take a standard examination before being given their high school diplomas.

Between six and seven Marylanders out of ten believe that students are not being made to work hard enough in school.

Discipline remains the top problem in the view of at least a third of the people in Maryland and close to that proportion nationwide. In fact, about 70 percent of the State's population feels it is at least a fairly serious problem in the public schools.

Other concerns of Marylanders, and, one might say, of all Americans, are drugs and alcoholism, the school curriculum and teaching standards, and finding good teachers.

PART II - OVERALL RATINGS

Maryland Public Schools

Marylanders rate the public schools in their communities about a C+. Those respondents who have children in the public schools tend to rate the schools a little higher than those who do not. Men and women, whites and non-whites differ only slightly when compared with the total national population in their grading of their communities' schools in Maryland; this indicates a fair amount of homogeneity among the various demographic groupings within the State. Only parents with children in nonpublic schools give the local public schools a grade of C. Parents who have children in both public and nonpublic schools rate the public schools at the State average or higher. Young Marylanders, under the age of 30, tend to give fewer A's and B's to their community schools than do the older Marylanders.

The question:

> Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade you would give the public schools here—A, B, C, D, or FAIL?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
A rating	8	10	6	10	6
B rating	35	32	33	44	18
C rating	35	35	36	34	41
D rating	7	11	7	7	17
FAIL	3	4	3	2	7
Don't Know	11	8	15	3	11

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	GPA*	A+B	D+F
[Nation	2.36	42%	15%]
Maryland	2.42	43	10
No Sch. Children	2.39	40	10
Pub. Sch. Parents	2.56	54	9
Nonpub. Sch. Par.	1.99	24	24
Men**	2.40	43	10
Women**	2.46	44	9
White	2.45	44	10
Non-White	2.37	40	11
18 to 29	2.33	36	8
30 to 49	2.45	46	12
50 and Over	2.48	43	10
Grade School	2.45	44	14
High School	2.30	42	9
College	2.47	45	10

* GPA stands for Grade Point Average and is calculated by multiplying the number who said "A" by 4, the number who said "B" by 3, "C" by 2, "D" by 1, and "F" by 0 and averaging.

** The breakdown by sex, in this and following, tables, is based only on certain school systems.

Rating of Public Schools Nationally

People in Maryland generally rate the nation's schools lower than they rate the schools in their own community. However, the more education a Marylander has, the less likely it is that he or she will give the nation's schools a higher grade.

The question:

How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally— A, B, C, D, or FAIL?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
A rating	3	2	3	3	1
B rating	24	23	25	23	19
C rating	42	49	44	46	57
D rating	9	11	9	9	9
FAIL	2	4	2	1	4
Don't Know	17	11	17	18	10

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	GPA	A+B	D+F
[Nation	2.09	25%	15%]
Maryland	2.21	27	11
No Sch. Children	2.22	28	11
Pub. Sch. Parents	2.21	26	10
Nonpub. Sch. Par.	2.04	20	13
Men	2.19	27	12
Women	2.21	28	11
White	2.18	25	10
Non-White	2.31	33	11
18 to 29	2.21	30	13
30 to 49	2.22	26	9
50 and Over	2.21	26	11
Grade School	2.29	33	14
High School	2.23	29	10
College	2.14	22	10

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Rating of Maryland Teachers

People in Maryland are positive in their rating of their community's teachers. Over half of the Maryland respondents give them grades of A or B, higher than the national rating. Differences in ratings by most subgroups are negligible; an exception is a lower rating of public school teachers by parents of nonpublic school children. A larger proportion of an A's is given by Marylanders who are 50 years old and over or those with less than a high school diploma.

The question:

> Now, what grade would you give the teachers in the public schools in this community?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
A rating	14	12	14	14	10
B rating	41	37	39	45	37
C rating	25	31	24	28	29
D rating	5	7	4	5	7
FAIL	2	3	2	2	3
Don't Know	13	9	15	5	15

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	GPA	A+B	D+F
[Nation	2.55	50%	15%]
Maryland	2.69	55	7
No Sch. Children	2.71	54	6
Pub. Sch. Parents	2.68	59	7
Nonpub. Sch. Par.	2.51	47	10
Men	2.69	56	7
Women	2.73	55	6
White	2.70	56	6
Non-White	2.67	52	5
18 to 29	2.65	54	7
30 to 49	2.66	56	7
50 and Over	2.78	55	7
Grade School	2.77	56	9
High School	2.67	55	7
College	2.69	56	5

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Rating of Principals and Administrators

Over half of the respondents rates Maryland administrators as above average, again a rating above the national mark. The grades given administrators tend to be lower as the respondent's education increases, and to be higher as the respondent's age increases.

The question:

> **Now, what grade would you give the principals and administrators in the local public schools in this community?**

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
A rating	16	13	15	19	6
B rating	37	34	35	42	37
C rating	23	29	22	23	30
D rating	6	8	6	5	6
FAIL	3	5	3	3	5
Don't Know	15	11	18	7	17

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	GPA	A+B	D+F
[Nation	2.47	47%	13%]
Maryland	2.66	53	9
No Sch. Children	2.64	50	10
Pub. Sch. Parents	2.73	61	9
Nonpub. Sch. Par.	2.39	43	11
Men	2.65	55	11
Women	2.72	52	7
White	2.65	51	9
Non-White	2.68	56	9
18 to 29	2.57	51	10
30 to 49	2.63	52	10
50 and Over	2.81	54	8
Grade School	2.78	59	10
High School	2.66	53	10
College	2.60	49	8

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Rating of Maryland School Boards

While the Maryland respondents rate their members of school boards somewhat lower than they do their teachers and administrators, school boards still receive a C+ rating. Those parents with children only in the nonpublic schools are less friendly toward school boards in the State than are parents with children in the public schools. Also, the more educated the respondent, the lower the grade he or she gives school boards. Proportionately, more women than men appear to like their school boards.

The question:

Now, what grade would you give the school board in this community?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
A rating	11	9	11	11	6
B rating	29	32	28	31	23
C rating	27	29	24	30	35
D rating	9	11	9	8	9
FAIL	4	6	3	4	6
Don't Know	21	13	23	15	22

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	GPA	A+B	D+F
[Nation	2.31	41%	17%]
Maryland	2.44	39	12
No Sch. Children	2.44	39	13
Pub. Sch. Parents	2.46	42	12
Nonpub. Sch. Par.	2.18	29	15
Men	2.39	39	15
Women	2.48	42	11
White	2.41	39	13
Non-White	2.51	42	11
18 to 29	2.39	36	12
30 to 49	2.40	40	14
50 and Over	2.53	41	11
Grade School	2.65	47	10
High School	2.43	39	12
College	2.32	36	14

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Rating of Maryland Parents

Marylanders are least happy with the parents of public school children for the way they are "bringing up" those children. They give parents an average grade of C, a Grade Point Average lower than that of the national sample. Teachers, administrators, and school boards in the Maryland sample grade parents somewhat higher than do those in the national sample. Parents who have children in the public schools grade parents higher than parents of nonpublic school children; while non-whites grade parents lower than do white respondents.

The question:

> **Now, what grade would you give the parents of students in the local public schools for bringing up their children?**

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
A rating	7	7	6	9	6
B rating	23	26	20	29	25
C rating	37	36	38	36	36
D rating	15	16	15	14	17
FAIL	3	6	8	5	10
Don't Know	10	9	12	6	7

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	GPA	A+B	D+F
[Nation	2.13	33%	22%]
Maryland	2.09	30	22
No Sch. Children	2.00	26	23
Pub. Sch. Parents	2.25	38	19
Nonpub. Sch. Par.	2.00	31	27
Men	2.00	30	26
Women	2.05	28	22
White	2.14	31	20
Non-White	1.93	27	28
18 to 29	2.13	32	21
30 to 49	2.10	32	22
50 and Over	2.01	25	22
Grade School	2.05	34	27
High School	2.04	28	23
College	2.20	32	17

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Tax Increase to Support Public Schools

By a wide majority, Marylanders say they would approve higher taxes for their schools if they were told that much more money was needed for education. Significantly, this statistic differs from the national sample which still indicates that most people are against an increase in taxes for education.

Maryland sub-groups supporting the possible raising of taxes for education include non-whites, the college-educated, parents of public school children and younger people in the population.

The question:

> Suppose the local public schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you be willing to pay more taxes for this purpose, or would you be against raising taxes for this purpose?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
For raising taxes	60	41	58	68	46
Against raising taxes	33	47	35	26	52
No opinion	7	12	7	6	2

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	For Raising Taxes	Against Raising Taxes	No Opinion
Men	63	32	6
Women	60	33	7
White	58	35	7
Non-White	68	27	5
18 to 29	62	32	6
30 to 49	65	29	6
50 and Over	53	39	8
Grade School	50	40	10
High School	59	34	7
College	68	26	6

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PART III - GENERAL EDUCATION ISSUES

The Goals of Education

What does the Maryland public consider to be the role of the schools? Every parent has different expectations for his or her child, but respondents both nationwide and in the State of Maryland are almost unanimous in placing at the top of their lists the expectation that schools teach children how to speak and write correctly.

But at this point, Maryland and the rest of the nation part company. Marylanders place as second in importance, "instilling in students the desire to continue learning throughout one's life." For Americans at large, this is 12th in a list of 16 choices. At the bottom of the list, for the Maryland and national sample are: (a) developing an appreciation for and participation in the arts, music, literature, theatre, etc., (b) promoting physical development through sports programs, and (c) developing an understanding of democracy and the importance of political participation.

Table 1 gives the average rating for the state as a whole, the standard deviation* and the ratings of sub-groups.

In the nationwide survey, Gallup looks only at those respondents who gave a 10 (the highest rating) to a particular goal. Table 2 compares the Maryland public with the national public on that basis and indicates how each public ranks the goals.

The question:

> I am going to read you a list of possible goals of education. I would like you to rate the importance of each goal on a scale of zero to 10. A zero means a goal should not be a part of the public school program. A 10 means a goal is the most important goal--before all others. A rating between zero and 10 means you consider the goal to be somewhat in between in importance.

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* The standard deviation is the measure of rating spread. The higher the standard deviation (S.D.) the more divergent are the ratings.

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TABLE

	Aver. Rating (S.D.)	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Develop the ability to speak and write correctly	9.32 (1.52)	9.32	9.30	9.27
Encourage the desire to continue learning throughout one's life	9.17 (1.65)	9.13	9.28	9.15
Develop skills needed to get jobs for those not planning to go to college	9.10 (1.64)	9.07	9.19	9.03
Develop the ability to use mathematics for everyday problems	9.08 (1.57)	9.02	9.24	8.92
Develop good work habits, the ability to organize one's thoughts, the ability to concentrate	9.08 (1.59)	9.04	9.22	8.91
Develop the ability to think--creatively, objectively, analytically	9.04 (1.55)	8.96	9.21	8.92
Prepare for college those who plan to attend college	9.04 (1.73)	9.01	9.05	9.03
Develop the ability to live in a complex and changing world	8.75 (1.90)	8.68	8.84	8.85
Develop the desire to excel	8.53 (1.95)	8.53	8.61	8.20
Develop respect for and understanding of other races, religions, nations and cultures	8.41 (2.03)	8.40	8.49	8.15
Gain an understanding of science and technology	8.40 (1.75)	8.31	8.60	26
Gain knowledge about the world of today and yesterday (history, geography)	8.31 (1.76)	8.2	8.39	8.04
Develop the ability to understand and use computers	7.80 (2.16)	7.76	7.92	7.58
Develop an appreciation for and participation in the arts, music, literature, theater	7.54 (2.04)	7.50	7.67	7.14
Promote physical development through sports programs	7.53 (1.99)	7.50	7.60	7.18
Develop an understanding of democracy and to promote participation in the political process	7.32 (2.34)	7.23	7.57	7.00

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TABLE 2

	Highest Rating (in percent) MD (Rank)	US (Rank)
Develop the ability to speak and write correctly	72 (1)	68 (1)
Encourage the desire to continue learning throughout one's life	69 (2)	41 (12)
Develop skills needed to get jobs for those not planning to go to college	64 (3)	54 (2.5)
Develop the ability to use mathematics for everyday problems	62 (5)	54 (2.5)
Develop good work habits, the ability to organize one's thoughts, the ability to concentrate	61 ( )	48 (7)
Develop the ability to think--creatively, objectively, analytically	59 (7)	51 (5)
Prepare for college those who plan to attend college	63 (4)	46 (8)
Develop the ability to live in a complex and changing world	55 (8)	51 (5)
Develop the desire to excel	48 (9)	51 (5)
Develop respect for and understanding of other races, religions, nations and cultures	45 (10)	39 (13)
Gain an understanding of science and technology	37 (11)	45 (9)
Gain knowledge about the world of today and yesterday (histor . geography)	35 (12)	42 (11)
Develop the ability to understand and use computers	29 (13)	43 (10)
Develop an appreciation for and participation in the arts, music, literature, theater	23 (15)	35 (14)
Promote physical development through sports programs	23 (16)	20 (16)
Develop an understanding of democracy and to promote participation in the political process	25 (14)	33 (15)

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Importance of Extracurricular Activities

In Maryland, nearly half of the respondents say it believes extracurricular activities are "very important" to a young person's education. This differs from the national rating. Gallup continues to note a decline in the proportion of those who say that extracurricular activities are "very important"—from 45 percent in 1978 to 31 percent in 1984.

Nationwide, people with higher education levels more frequently rate extracurricular activities as "very important;" but in Maryland, level of education seems to have no effect on this rating. Non-whites rate extracurricular activities as "very important" more frequently than do whites.

The question:

> I'd like your opinion about extracurricular activities such as the school band, dramatics, sports and the school paper. How important are these to a young person's education—very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Very important	45	31	44	44	45
Fairly important	44	46	44	46	47
Not too important	9	19	9	8	6
Not at all import.	2	4	2	2	2
No opinion	1	1	1	0	0

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not too Important	Not at all Import.	No Opinion
Men	44	43	10	2	1
Women	44	46	9	1	0
White	42	47	9	2	0
Non-White	52	35	9	3	1
18 to 29	46	44	8	2	0
30 to 49	42	48	8	2	0
50 and Over	47	38	11	2	1
Grade School	46	36	12	5	2
High School	44	45	9	1	1
College	45	46	8	1	0

National Test for Graduation

The Maryland public favors three to one the idea that high school students be required to pass a standard examination before receiving a diploma. The national ratio is closer to two to one. College graduates and non-whites in Maryland are less inclined to approve such exams but their approval rate is no smaller than that of the nation as a whole.

The question:

Should all high school students in the United States be required to pass a standard nationwide examination in order to get a high school diploma?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Yes	74	65	73	75	77
No	22	29	24	22	17
No opinion	4	6	3	3	6

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Men	76	20	4
Women	76	21	3
White	77	20	3
Non-White	65	30	5
18 to 29	72	26	2
30 to 49	76	20	4
50 and Over	73	22	5
Grade School	74	21	5
High School	77	20	3
College	69	28	3

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Amount of Schoolwork Required

The consensus nationwide is that the schools do not make students work hard enough, and Marylanders believe that by an even wider margin than the country as a whole. Non-whites are more inclined than whites to want more homework for children, especially at the elementary and junior high levels. The gap in the proportion that believes students should be made to work harder increases between men and women with each school level.

The questions:

> In general, do you think elementary school children in the public schools here are made to work too hard or not hard enough?
>
> What about students in public junior high schools (middle schools, intermediate level schools) here? Are they required to work too hard or not hard enough?
>
> And, what about students in public high schools here--in general, are they required to work too hard or not hard enough?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Elementary					
Too hard	4	5	3	3	3
Not hard enough	65	59	67	61	82
About right	17	24	14	26	7
Don't know	14	12	17	6	8
Junior High					
Too hard	3		3	4	2
Not hard enough	68		71	61	80
About right	13		11	17	5
Don't know	16		15	18	13
High School					
Too hard	4	4	3	4	3
Not hard enough	70	67	74	61	80
About right	12	18	11	16	5
Don't know	15	11	12	19	12

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	Not Hard Enough*		
	Elementary	Jr. High	High School
Men	70	74	76
Women	65	67	67
White	63	66	69
Non-White	71	76	72
18 to 29	67	69	73
30 to 49	63	66	67
50 and Over	67	70	72
Grade School	68	67	54
High School	66	70	73
College	63	66	68

*The proportion of "too hard" responses is between 2 and 7 percent and is most commonly 4 or 5 percent. "About right" varies accordingly.

PART IV - CURRENT ISSUES

Major Problems Confronting the Public Schools

The Maryland sample cites discipline most frequently as the major problem facing the schools. The major problems noted in Maryland are clearly discipline, drugs, alcoholism, the problem of teacher selection, and curriculum planning, as well as large classes. Parent apathy, the major concern of teachers in a recent national Gallup Poll, is mentioned by only 5 or 6 percent of the Maryland public.

The question:

> **What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community have to deal?**

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Discipline	33	28	34	29	48
Drugs	21	18	24	16	15
Alcohol	-	4			
Curriculum	16	15	14	18	20
Standards	5	-	7	5	9
Not enough basics	6	-	5	7	5
Teachers	13	15	10	16	25
Lack of interest		5			
Large classes	9	4	7	11	13
Low parent interest	5	6	6	5	1
No problems	4	1	2	3	2
Closing schools	2	-	3	1	2
Other	31	49	28	38	24
Don't know	20	10	23	14	10

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The Problem of Discipline

A larger proportion of Marylanders sees discipline in the schools as a serious problem than does the national sample. Parents of children in the public schools are among the least likely to see discipline as a serious problem, although 71 percent of them consider it at least fairly serious. Non-whites are more apt to describe discipline problems as very serious, and the proportion of those who consider it "very serious" appears to drop as education levels drop.

The question:

> How serious a problem would you say discipline is in the public schools in the community—very serious, fairly serious, not too serious, or not at all serious?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Very serious	42	34	45	36	50
Fairly serious	31	34	30	35	34
Not too serious	17	22	16	22	9
Not at all serious	3	4	2	4	1
No opinion	5	6	7	3	7

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	Very Serious	Fairly Serious	Not too Serious	Not at All Serious	No Opinion
Men	50	25	16	3	5
Women	43	34	14	3	6
White	39	33	19	2	7
Non-White	52	27	13	4	4
18 to 29	41	33	20	2	3
30 to 49	39	34	18	3	6
50 and Over	49	27	14	3	7
Grade School	50	24	15	4	6
High School	45	32	16	3	4
College	35	33	20	2	10

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State Board Examination for Teachers

In Maryland, as in the nation, almost 90 percent of the respondents favor requiring teachers to pass a state board examination before they are permitted to teach. The lowest proportion to want such examinations are non-whites and the college educated, but they, too, are above 80 percent for the groups.

The question:

> **In addition to meeting college requirements for a teacher's certificate, should those who want to become teachers also be required to pass a state board examination before they are hired, to prove their knowledge in the subjects they will teach?**

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Yes	99	89	90	88	91
No	8	7	8	9	9
No opinion	2	4	2	3	0

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Men	90	7	3
Women	89	9	2
White	91	7	2
Non-White	84	12	4
18 to 29	90	9	1
30 to 49	88	9	3
50 and Over	91	7	2
Grade School	91	5	4
High School	91	7	2
College	85	13	2

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Teachers' Salaries in This Community

More than half the Maryland public says that teachers' salaries are too low by the standards of the community in which that public lives. While over 40 percent in the national Gallup Poll say teachers' salaries are just about right, fewer than 30 percent say that in Maryland.

Parents of children in the schools are more likely to rate salaries as too low than are those people with no children in the schools. Males, young people, and non-whites more frequently say that the salaries are too low than do females, people over 50, and whites. The higher the level of education, the more prevalent the belief that teachers' salaries are too low.

The question:

Do you think salaries for teachers in this community are too high, too low, or just about right?

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Too high	3	7	3	4	4
Too low	54	37	51	56	60
About right	27	41	28	26	19
No opinion	16	15	18	15	17

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	Too High	Too Low	About Right	No Opinion
Men	2	59	[illegible]	14
Women	3	49	29	19
White	3	51	29	17
Non-White	2	63	19	16
18 to 29	3	59	23	16
30 to 49	3	58	23	16
50 and Over	3	43	36	17
Grade School	5	38	37	20
High School	3	52	28	17
College	4	64	19	13

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Paying Mathematics and Science Teachers More

Marylanders are about evenly split on the question of paying higher salaries to teachers in fields with shortages, such as science, mathematics, and technical and vocational subjects. A recent national poll indicates that teachers opposed the idea three to one. In Maryland, men are slightly more inclined to favor the idea than are women.

The question:

> **Today there is a shortage of teachers in science, mathematics, technical subjects, and vocational subjects. If your local schools needed teachers in these subjects, would you favor or oppose paying them higher wages than teachers of other subjects?**

	Total %		Maryland %		
	Maryland	Nation	No Children in School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
Favor	48	48	48	46	50
Oppose	46	43	46	48	45
No opinion	6	9	6	6	5

Further Maryland breakdowns:

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
Men	51	43	5
Women	44	49	7
White	48	47	5
Non-White	47	44	9
18 to 29	45	50	5
30 to 49	48	46	6
50 and Over	49	43	8
Grade School	49	40	11
High School	46	47	6
College	49	47	4

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PART V - DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The Sample. The sample for this survey was designed by Survey Sampling, Inc., of Westport, CT. It is described as a "Random Digit Super Sample," which involves systematically drawing a number of telephone exchanges (three digits), plus the next two digits, the latter representing blocks of numbers that are in use on that exchange. Two random digits are then added to make a complete telephone number.

Twenty sets of complete samples of 80 each were thus selected in each of the 24 school systems in the State of Maryland. Each system was asked to complete 400 telephone surveys. Although some systems did fewer interviews and some, more, 8,752 interviews were completed in the State. Adults 18 years of age and older were interviewed.

Time of Interviewing. Interviews were conducted by each school system between July 30 and August 24, 1984.

The Report. This report is based on a random sample of 2,080 drawn from the completed interviews in proportion to the number of households in each school district. (The male/female breakdown, however, is based on only a few of the school districts. Although all systems maintained a 50:50 ratio of male and female respondents, sex was not recorded on all forms. The sex breakdowns in the report may not, therefore, be representative of the views of all males and/or females in the State.) The sample appears to under-represent those with little education and, possibly, over-represent people under 30 and those over 50. Its ethnic breakdown, however, is very close to that revealed in the last census.

Sampling Tolerances. All sample surveys are a compromise between accuracy and economy. They are subject to sampling error due to the chance drawing of a particular respondent and also to non-sampling error. Not much can be done about the latter except to be careful in collecting and compiling the data. The possible range of sampling error, however, may be calculated.

The amount of error depends on the size of the sample (not the population); the larger the sample, the smaller the error. Since the error is reduced by half every time the sample is quadrupled in size, the time comes fairly soon when it no longer pays to increase the size of the sample. Of course, when we are dealing with a sub-sample, such as parents who have children in both public and nonpublic schools (31 in this survey), or non-whites (504 in this survey), we must use those figures in calculating the error rather than the total sample.

The error also is greater when close to 50 percent of the sample answer the same way and smaller when only, say, 10 percent or as many as 90 percent answer the same way. The following table shows how much error to allow for with varying sample sizes and response rates. The confidence level of the table is 95 percent, i.e., one can be certain that if the survey were repeated a hundred times, 95 times we would get an answer within the margin of error indicated. This means that the "true" response of the total population would probably be the response obtained in the survey, plus or minus the percentage points in the table.

Sampling Error No Greater Than Percentage Points Indicated

% Giving a Particular Response	Sample or Sub-Sample Size							
	2000	1500	1000	750	500	300	100	80
10% or 90%	1	2	2	2	3	4	5	7
20% or 80%	2	2	3	3	4	5	7	9
30% or 70%	2	2	3	3	4	5	8	10
40% or 60%	2	3	3	4	4	6	8	11
50%	2	3	3	4	5	6	8	11

Composition of the Sample

School Connections	
No children in school	62%
Pre-school children only	5
Children in public school	27
Children in private school	5
Children in both	2

Race	
American Indian	*
Black	21%
Hispanic	1
Asian-Pacific	1
White	75
Other	1
No answer	1

*Half a percent or less.

Education	
Less than high school	14%
High school graduate	35
Technical, trade school	3
College incomplete	19
College graduate	16
Graduate study	6
Advanced degree	7
No answer	*

Age	
18 to 29	26%
30 to 49	44
50 and over	29
No answer	1

Sex	
Male	47%
Female	53

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